

Good Morning, Senator Slap, Representative Elliott, and esteemed members of the Higher Education and Employment Advancement Committee

I am here to testify regarding Bills HB 5300 **requesting Legislative Approval** (both the House and Senate) for the merger of, and any closing of, the 12 community colleges.

In addition, I would like to comment on the Bill regarding the ability of **unemployed Part-Time employees** to apply for and receive Unemployment Benefits when their contract ends every semester.

My name is Patty Burke, and I have worked for MCC as an adjunct faculty member since 2001 generally teaching one course per semester. I'm a single parent with a child on disability, and need this income. I also work part-time at the 4cs, and full time for a non-profit health care Agency.

The majority of faculty at the community colleges are part time, currently 76% of the teaching faculty. This consolidation process is not working for any of us. For instance, last month I received 4 identical deposits into my checking account for \$554.43. I called our farmed out HR representative at the System Office (which has an **unfunded budget large enough to be a 13th Community College** and getting larger), and talked to voicemail. While I thought maybe this was a catch up, I wondered if I could spend the money. I called our Union (the 4cs), and found out it was a payroll error.

Did you know that part-time employees, once their semester contract ends with the college, have to beg and plead with the Labor Dept for the small amount of unemployment dollars they can receive? Seasonal laborers receive unemployment benefits. You can rectify this.

Part-time faculty don't have the on campus contacts with HR that we used to. The proposed new management structure has an additional layer of middle management, some of whom will be paid from dollars spent on not filling positions lost to attrition or a redeployment of the dollars previously paid to department chairs who are the subject matter experts in their fields. (You will note from the new proposed organization chart that subject matter experts no longer exist.) And while I'm on that topic, student mental health counselors have been out-sourced, Student Disabilities Offices have been downsized. These are all 'STUDENT FACING' positions that are disappearing.

Part Timers in the college system, which includes adjuncts, librarians and educational assistants, with no healthcare or other benefits, no longer are able to serve the most important people in these scenarios – OUR STUDENTS.

You can take a peek at the published payscales online for the community colleges. About the top 20% of employees earn over \$57,000 per year with full benefits and pension based on earnings. The bottom 76% (part-timers) earn on average, \$10,000 per year with no healthcare or other benefits. Our small pensions are also based on income. So, the concept of overpaid employees doesn't apply to us.

I often wonder and there is no good answer Isn't college supposed to be where young people learn critical thinking skills? Aren't we supposed to be growing good citizens? Don't our students deserve a regular contact with a college teacher throughout their time in school? New Academic Advisors have a 250:1 ratio per Advisor. Is that working? Why can't we pull it together to serve the most disenfranchised young people in this very wealthy state?

ALL LEGISLATORS DESERVE TO KNOW WHAT IS HAPPENING ON THE GROUND AT EACH OF THESE COLLEGES.

Patty Burk

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